**Structured Small Group Program**

This document is to be followed as you collect and organize information for entry into the Livetext template for your structure small group assignment. It is important that all the elements detailed in this document are represented within the Livetext template. The Livetext template is not as detailed as this document and therefore these guidelines should serve as the primary source for ensuring you have included all the required information for this project. ***All items in bold should be addressed in the Livetext template. All information in italics is for explanation purposes only.***

**Component #1: Needs, Goals, Objectives**

**Title of your Group Program: \_\_Coping with Stress Related to Deployment (Surviving Our Deployment).**

1. **Student identifies two existing data sources and one other approach for assessing student needs and describes how these data sources will be analyzed in order to identify needs and gaps in achievement (Rationale/Need).**

According to Lester, Mogil, Saltzman, et al. (2011), there are over two million children with an active duty parent that has experienced one or more parents involved in combat related deployments; and “the stress of multiple and prolonged wartime deployments may take their toll on military children” (Lester, 2011, p. 19). According to Swenson and Wolff (2011), three out of every five service members have family members who are affected by stressful separations due to military deployment. There is a national concern to lessen the burden of deployment stress on military families (Swenson & Wolff, 2011). An approach for assessing student needs is to provide teachers with a survey asking them which students would benefit from the group. Each teacher knows their student and knows if they are from a military family. The survey will address different signs of stress associated with deployment and ask the teachers to submit a survey form with the various stressors marked regarding each student who is being recommended. The aforementioned existing data sources are beneficial in identifying the needs in the school because there are two military bases in the community; and many military families are located within the surrounding areas. Power school, which is the school’s data base, can also provide the names of students who are a part of a military family; therefore, the data sources will provide the information needed in order to specify students of military families. The type of need identified is a felt need due to the presence of military families from the local military installations within the community.

**Population: (brief paragraph)**

This group is for male and/or female students in grades 6-8, who have experienced a parent being deployed in the last 12 months.

**Recruitment and Screening: (brief paragraph)**

The primary recruitment strategies will be through the use of flyers and daily announcements. The flyers will be electronically sent via email to all staff within the school environment, a hard copy of the flyer will be placed in each staff members’ mailbox, and fliers will be mailed to the homes of military families within the school. The flyers are to be placed within each classroom as a reminder to the daily announcements. Fliers will also be posted in the commons areas and cafeteria. The main announcements are done daily in the morning; therefore, each morning the flyer will be read and the invitation to participate within the group will be emphasized. The principal will do the daily announcements and I will distribute the fliers via email and place a hard copy in the staff’s mailboxes. The fliers, along with mailing them to the military families within the school, and daily announcements will begin exactly three weeks prior to the beginning of the group sessions.

The primary instrumentation to be used for screening is the use of a questionnaire. The questionnaire will be given to each student that is referred to the program by a teacher, staff member, and/or parent. The questionnaire will be administered during the students’ study hall period, homeroom, and/or first period. Once the questionnaire is completed the teachers will return completed questionnaire in my mailbox. The questionnaire will consist of three questions, and the final question will list eight indicators. If the students answer yes to the first two questions and check at least six out of the eight indicators then they will be selected for the small group. The questions that will be asked are: is one or both of your parents enlisted in the United States military; has one or both of your parents been deployed in the past 12 months; are you and/or have you experienced any of the following emotions: sadness, depression, withdrawal, loneliness, anger, anxiousness, change in sleep and/or eating habits, and difficulty concentrating in school.

**Group Structure: (brief paragraph)**

This is a psychoeducational closed group that will meet six sessions for six weeks in duration (meeting once a week over the course of six weeks)*.* The sessions will be from 10:00-10:30 AM during the silent sustained reading/Study hall time. The location of the sessions will be in the counseling conference room. This program will be offered twice a year.

1. **Student develops one overarching goal for the group program based on identified need; the goal aligns with the academic mission of schools.**

Educate about emotional cycles of deployment and discuss coping skills to alleviate stresses associated with the deployment of their parent(s).

1. **Student develops two measurable objectives for session #1 of the structured group program that supports the established goal (one school counseling content and one mathematics content).**

Given a handout on unhealthy and healthy ways to cope with stress, students will identify 2 unhealthy and 2 healthy ways to cope with a stressful situation.

Given unhealthy and healthy examples of dealing with stress related to deployment, the student will create 1 graph (bar, line, pie, scatter plot) charting the common themes/examples of ways of dealing with stresses related to deployment.

1. **Student develops two measurable objectives for session #2 of the structured group program that supports the established goal (one school counseling content and one language arts content).**

Given a handout on physical and/or emotional feelings related to stress, the student will identify 2 physical and/or emotional feelings related to stress.

Given an outline of a body, the student will draw at least 3 symbols and/or pictures where and how stress affects them within their body.

1. **Student briefly describes the importance of data-driven, needs-based programming that clearly aligns professional school counseling with the mission of schools.**

Data-driven, needs-based programming is an essential piece within a school counseling program. Its importance is connected to the sustainability of school counseling programs provided within the school for the benefit of the student. Data is needed to support and “prove” the need for school counseling programs. The data provides the evidence for needs-based programs. The overall goal(s) and/or mission of schools are to provide support for the students; and this can be done through the implementation and execution of school counseling programs.

**Component #2: Research-Supported and Standards-Based Content**

1. **Student provides step-by-step process and activities to be covered in session #1 (research support for theoretical orientation and techniques required from at least one scholarly peer reviewed counseling journal, preferably ASCA’s journal, Professional School Counseling*.* Include all ancillary materials as section attachments in Livetext. Please be specific in the file names you choose so attachments are clearly identified in each section.**

**Title of Session #1:** Coping with It

**Brief Summary of Session:**

I will begin session with asking students to describe difference between healthy and unhealthy foods and ask them how they know what is healthy. We will discuss the ways we cope with the stress of deployment healthily or unhealthily. We will discuss examples and then take a poll and analyze common themes concerning healthy and unhealthy ways of dealing with stress. We will create a graph (bar, line, pie, scatter plot, etc.) charting the common themes. I will let them know they will participate in a skit/role-play activity to better understand healthy and unhealthy ways to cope with the stress of deployment. Students will be given divided into groups of 4 or 5 and given a handout and assigned a situation for each team to role-play. Each team will do 2 role-plays; one way will demonstrate the healthy way to deal with the stress and the other will demonstrate the unhealthy way to deal with stress. The closure will be that the students are given 1 minute to call out as many healthy coping strategies as possible and I will suggest that they try a strategy they’ve never tried before the next time they are feeling stressed.

**Theoretical Orientation:**

The orientation of this session is based on the psychodrama theory introduced by J. L. Moreno. According to Corey, “Psychodrama is primarily an action approach to group therapy in which clients explore their problems through role playing, enacting situations using various dramatic devices to gain insight, discover their own creativity, and develop behavioral skills” (2012, p. 190).

**Specific Group Technique:**

The specific group technique is role playing.“Role playing is an experiential mode that involves active integration of the imaginative and emotional dimensions of human experience, and it is widely used in education from preschool to professional graduate programs” (Corey, 2012, p. 212).

**Duration:** 1 hour (broken up into 2 sessions)

**Materials/ Media:** Handout on unhealthy and healthy ways to cope with stress and handout with instructions for role-play and situations for groups to role-play.

**Core ASCA Standard(s):**

Standard C: Students will understand safety and survival skills.

PS:C1 Acquire Personal Safety Skills

PS:C1.11 Learn coping skills for managing life events

**Core National Academic Standard(s):**

NM-NUM.6-8.1 Understand numbers, ways of representing numbers, relationships among numbers and number systems.

**Objectives:**

Given a handout on unhealthy and healthy ways to cope with stress, students will identify 2 unhealthy and 2 healthy ways to cope with a stressful situation.

Given unhealthy and healthy examples of dealing with stress related to deployment, the student will create 1 graph (bar, line, pie, scatter plot) charting the common themes/examples of ways of dealing with stresses related to deployment.

**Assessments**:

Students will identify 2 unhealthy and 2 healthy ways to cope with a stressful situation through role-play.

Student will create 1 graph charting the common themes/examples of dealing with stresses related to deployment.

**Procedures/ Instructional Strategy (*provided by Confronting Teen Stress: Meeting the Challenge in Baltimore City*):**

1. Ask students to describe the difference between healthy and unhealthy foods. How do they know what is healthy? Explain that the ways we cope with stress in our lives also can be healthy or unhealthy (discuss difference between health and unhealthy coping strategies). Ask for examples.
2. Discuss examples and then take a poll and analyze common themes concerning healthy and unhealthy ways of dealing with stress. We will create a graph (bar, line, pie, scatter plot, etc.) charting the common themes
3. Tell them that today they will participate in a skit activity to understand healthy and unhealthy ways to cope with stress.
4. Tell students that they will be assigned to a team and a “situation” to act out in front of the group. Their team should plan a short skit with a role for each person using the assigned situation. Their skit should include an *unhealthy* coping strategy.
5. Tell them that they will present the skit to the group. After they present, the group will comment on the *unhealthy* coping strategy. The team will then choose one volunteer from the group to take the place of the stressed teen and act out a *healthy* coping

strategy. The volunteer should tell the team the plan quietly. For a second time, the team should act out the entire skit with the volunteer, this time with the stressed teen coping in a *healthy* way.

1. Assign teams (either by choice or another method).
2. Give a handout and assign a situation to each team.
3. Allow teams to prepare and practice.
4. Have each team present and identify healthy and unhealthy coping strategies seen through role-play.

**Closure:** Tell the teens they have 1 minute to call out as many healthy coping strategies as they can. Count them up and suggest they try one they’ve never tried before the next time they are feeling stressed.

**Homework/ Ownwork**:

When feeling stressed, try to use a healthy coping strategy discussed in the session.

**Group Stage and Emerging Issues*:***

The group stage is the transition stage, in which the student may feel anxious and/or defensive. Students may have a fear of being judged, too emotional, and not trust if it’s a safe environment. The tasks may not be something they are familiar with doing; therefore, they may not want to actively participate in role-play. They also may not want to participate in the role-play because they may feel uncomfortable getting up in front of others.

1. **Student provides step-by-step process and activities to be covered in session #2 (research support for theoretical orientation and techniques required from at least one scholarly peer reviewed counseling journal, preferably ASCA’s journal, Professional School Counseling*.* Include all ancillary materials as section attachments in Livetext. Please be specific in the file names you choose so attachments are clearly identified in each section.**

**Title of Session #2:** Mind-Body Connection

**Brief Summary of Session:**

Students will begin by making a tight fist for 30 seconds. Students will describe the feeling of letting go and making fist and then they will brainstorm ideas/strategies that work for them when feeling stressed. We will discuss the importance of understanding how your body acts under stress. Students will then perform an activity in which they recognize how their body reacts to pressure/stress. Finally, students will draw where and how stress affects them by using pictures and/or symbols within a provided body image outline.

**Theoretical Orientation:**

The orientation of this session is Gestalt therapy introduced by Fritz and Laura Perls. According to Corey, “Awareness, choice, and responsibility are cornerstones of practice” (2012, p. 288). In order to be self-aware there is a requirement of self-knowledge, responsibility for choices, and self-acceptance (Corey, 2012). There is also suggestion of reality therapy because the sessions focus on the here and now. The feelings are definitely immediate and currently taking place.

**Specific Group Technique:**

The specific group technique is the exaggeration technique. The group will be involved in a short demonstration of how their body reacts under pressure/stress in order to “exaggerate” their stressful experience. This demonstration will help to bring self-awareness to how their body responds under stress. Corey (2012) states, “group members are asked to repeat and intensify a particular behavior for the purpose of bringing out-of-awareness emotional processes to awareness” (p. 309). Exaggerating caused the person to experience the feeling associated with the action; and therefore, they will become more aware of the inner meaning of that action (Corey, 2012). The technique of focusing solely on the here and now is evident throughout the session as the students participate in the breathing technique.

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**Materials/ Media:**

Handouts and markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils.

**Core ASCA Standard(s):**

Standard C: Students will understand safety and survival skills.

PS:C1 Acquire Personal Safety Skills

PS:C1.10 Learn techniques for managing stress and conflicts

**Core National Academic Standard(s):**

NLA.12 Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g. for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

**Objectives:**

Given a handout on physical and/or emotional feelings related to stress, the student will identify 2 physical and/or emotional feelings related to stress.

Given an outline of a body, the student will draw at least 3 symbols and/or pictures where and how stress affects them within their body.

**Assessments**:

Student will identify 2 physical and/or emotional feelings related to stress.

Student will draw at least 3 symbols and/or pictures where and how stress affects them within their body.

**Procedures/ Instructional Strategy (*provided by Confronting Teen Stress: Meeting the Challenge in Baltimore City*):**

1. Students will make a fist really hard for 30 seconds.
2. Once completed, ask students to describe how they felt making fist and letting go.
3. Discus the importance of knowing/understanding how your body acts under stress.
4. Distribute the body handout to each student.
5. Brainstorm ideas/strategies that work for you when you feel stressed.
6. Encourage students to think of a time when each of them felt stressed out in the past two weeks. Tell them to think back to how the stress made them feel.
7. Invite students to draw on their individual body handout where stress was and how it made them feel. They may draw any pictures or symbols and may use any colors they choose.
8. After 10 minutes, go around and have each student share.
9. Ask them to talk about the stress, how it felt, and why they used the symbols and colors on their handout.
10. Continue the discussion by asking students how they coped with the stress and if they did anything to make the emotional and physical feelings go away.
11. Explain that one way to deal with stressful situations is relaxation breathing. Go over the way to do it.

**Closure:** Remind the teens to pay attention to how their bodies feel when they experience stress and suggest that they can use relaxation breathing for self-calming.

**Homework/ Ownwork**:

When your body begins to feel stressed try using the relaxation breathing technique to self-calm.

**Group Stage and Emerging Issues*:***

The group is in the transition stage; therefore, the group stage is forming/storming. The group is probably still forming and so there are probably still some feelings of anxiety, fear, excitement, etc. The group is still trying to come up with a certain identity and students may still feel a little uncomfortable with doing things in front of others. There may be some questioning of the assignments.

**Component #3: Ethical, Legal, Multicultural**

* 1. **Student identifies ethical and legal considerations in group work with minors in the schools and those specific to this group program.**

Ethical and legal considerations in group work with minors in a school setting and specific to this group include confidentiality, parental consent, student assent, and appropriate referrals. Confidentiality must be discussed at the beginning of the group process to inform students of the importance of confidentiality and the main things that would cause a breach of confidentiality with the counselor. The counselor must report what has been discussed if it endangers themselves, other students, or someone who is incapable of taking care of themselves. The counselor must also stress the importance of confidentiality within the group in order for the integrity of the group to remain. Parental consent must be received for students under the age of 18 and student assent must also be received as a part of participating in the group. This is so that parents and students can understand the purpose of the group and also agree to abide by the guidelines of the group process. Appropriate referrals must also be considered because some things may arise that is beyond the expertise of the counselor and the counselor may need to refer students to an outside agency.

* 1. **Student creates a signed consent form to be distributed to parents of students prior to participation in group counseling to include limits to confidentiality in group work (attach as a supplemental form in LiveText for this section).**

Students who are a part of the group will be given a consent form to be signed by themselves and their parents during an initial meeting. There will be an initial meeting informing the students of who has been selected to be a part of the group and if they wish to continue in the process then a letter of consent must be signed by them and their parents. Therefore, I will give each student a copy to be taken home and it must be returned prior to the start of the group in order for them to participate. I will also contact each parent to let them know of the letter being given to their child so they will be aware of what is going on.

* 1. **Student identifies how the group program is culturally sensitive, describes how issues of conflict, bias, prejudice, oppression, and discrimination are to be addressed during group, and identifies strategies included in the group program that promote a positive, caring, and safe learning group environments.**

The group is culturally sensitive in that the counselor has knowledge concerning various cultures and they will know through screening and selection exactly who will be in the group; so if the counselor does lack specific and/or general knowledge concerning a certain culture, they counselor can research and ask questions in order to be more informed about the culture. If various issues arise during group, the counselor will address each issue directly and use it as a “teachable” moment to inform each student that we all have different backgrounds but the one thing everyone desires is to be heard and understood; therefore, as a part of the group process, we need to be willing to allow everyone the opportunity to be heard and understood. Some issues may need to be discussed further with a particular student outside of the group process. If cultural issues arise, the counselor can also integrate the current situation into the lesson about stresses and show/discuss how negativity or misunderstanding of one’s culture can cause an individual to become stressed. The counselor can also address how military families come from various places and so they have different values and beliefs based on their culture. Group work is the main strategy used to promote a positive, caring, and safe learning environment; there is a need for others/support in order to cope with the stresses of deployment, which also emphasizes the need for each other during the group process.

* 1. **Student discusses the importance of carefully considering issues related to ethics, legal, professional, and cultural significance in the group process from making group opportunities available and member selection to group termination.**

The opportunity to become a part of this group is non-discriminatory; the option to become a part of the group is through self-selection, teacher referral, and/or parental referral. Therefore, there should be no ethical, legal, profession, and/or cultural discrimination in regards to students having the opportunity to participate in the group.

**Component #4: Program Evaluation**

1. **Student creates a pre-post measure for session #1 that includes only one multiple choice item for each session objective for a total of two items (one for the school counseling content and one for the core academic content).**
2. **Student creates a pre-post measure for session #2 that includes only one multiple choice item for each session objective for a total of two items (one for the school counseling content and one for the core academic content).**
3. **Student briefly describes the importance of program evaluation and outcome-driven programming in professional school counseling.**

Program evaluation is important to the school counseling profession; and as a part of my program evaluation the students will receive the same questionnaire they filled out during the screening and selection process. During this process, the students had to answer a questionnaire that specifically listed 8 stressors/symptoms associated with deployment. Once students complete the program and learn various coping strategies for stresses due to deployment, I will have the students complete the same questionnaire and see if there has been a decrease in the stresses/symptoms they selected. Initially, the students had to select 6 out of 8 stressors to be involved in the group and during the program evaluation process the students should only choose 4 or less out of the 8 stressors to show a decrease in the stressors experienced. I will also follow up through email with the teachers whose students were selected based on their recommendations in order to see if they see a decrease in the stressors that they selected on the survey given to them prior to the group beginning.

**References**

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Lester, P., Mogil, C., Saltzman, W., Woodward, K., Nash, W., Leskin, G.,…Beardslee, W. (2011). Families overcoming under stress: Implementing family-centered prevention for military families facing wartime deployments and combat operational stress. *Military Medicine*, 176(1), 19-25.

Swenson, R., & Wolf, J. (2011). Deployment for military families carries emotional and behavioral consequences. *The Brown University Child and Adolescent Behavior Letter*, 27(10), 5-7.

**Component #5: Scholarly Writing**